

Affidavit of Rachel Grant

I, Rachel Grant, being first duly sworn, state as follows:

1. My name is Rachel Grant.
2. I am 70 years old and live in Fairbanks, Alaska.
3. I live in a federally subsidized senior housing facility with my service dog,

Ruthie. Ruthie is trained to provide medical alerts if I am at risk of having a seizure.

4. I am retired. I receive \$846 a month in social security, less than \$400 a month from my Teamster's pension and Senior Benefit combined, and \$367 a month from Public Assistance.

5. I have serious medical issues that create substantial expenses and effect my day-to-day life. I was hit by a drunk driver in July 1990, which gave me a traumatic brain injury and cognitive impairment. I have been legally disabled since that day. As one consequence of this, I cannot use electronics, and so I do not own a computer. I also have a bleeding disorder called Factor XI deficiency, also known as hemophilia C, at 3% or less. I also have a glioma tumor the size of a raisin and on the left side of my skull, monoclonal gammopathy, and MCS (multiple chemical sensitivity). Due to my MCS, I can only eat organic food because I am allergic to dyes and chemicals. I am also required to take a supplement vitamin regime. I have records to substantiate each of these medical conditions that I can make available upon request.

6. My service dog, Ruthie, also has medical conditions that cause increased expenses. She is required to be on a special diet, so I purchase her dog food directly from the veterinarian at a cost of \$125 per bag. Each bag lasts about 30 days. I also pay for her vaccinations.

7. I have been receiving SNAP benefits for just about 20 years. Before my recertification last year, which I discuss in detail below, I never had a problem getting my recertifications timely approved. I would always go into the Fairbanks office and turn in my paperwork face-to-face.

8. This last time, I turned in my SNAP paperwork and I know it was received by October 24, 2023. It was not approved until February 7, 2024. In the interim, I went into the Fairbanks office in person about 10 times to check on my recertification. The people working there had no answers for me. They said there was nothing they could do, and I would have to wait.

9. Between applying for a recertification on October 24, 2023, and being approved for a recertification on February 7, 2024, I did not receive any written notice stating that the evaluation of my recertification would be delayed, or any written notice stating that I had the right to a hearing to challenge any delay in the evaluation of my recertification.

10. Not having SNAP for several months has been really hard. This delay occurred during the holiday season, and I could not afford a Thanksgiving meal or a Christmas meal. Every Christmas I would buy Ruthie a present at Cold Spot Seeds – but I could not afford to do so this year. The hardship in not receiving SNAP is compounded by the fact I can only eat organic foods, which are more expensive, and because I need to spend my money to purchase vitamins for my MCS (which are typically not eligible to be paid for by SNAP).

11. Beyond the benefits themselves, the delay in having my application processed created additional serious hardships. Due to my cognitive disability, I am not good with telephone calls and do not own a computer (which also means I do not have email). I could only check on my application in person at the Fairbanks office. This costs me gas money, wear and

tear on my old car, and impacts my schedule. I had wanted to spend the last several months focusing on starting my own business, but I could not do so when I had to focus instead on finding money for food.

12. This entire process has also increased my stress level. Last month, my doctor, Dr. Worthington, told me to reduce my stress levels because stress raises my blood pressure, which is a particular concern at my age. It was difficult to reduce my stress levels when I did not have the SNAP benefits I am entitled to.

Dated: February 14, 2024

Fairbanks, Alaska


Rachel Grant